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Agenda item 4 (a)

PROGRAMME QUESTIONS: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997

Note by the Secretariat

At its thirty-fourth session, the Commission for Social Development, by its resolution 34/5 (E/CN.5/1995/L.7), decided to transmit to the Economic and Social Council the views expressed and comments made during the debate in the Commission regarding the proposed programme of work of the Division for social Policy and Development of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development for the biennium 1996-1997; and requested the Secretariat to make these comments available to the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-fifth session. The views and comments are annexed to the present note.

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Annex

VIEWS EXPRESSED AND COMMENTS MADE DURING THE DEBATE IN THE COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ON THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE DIVISION FOR SOCIAL POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997

1. It was noted that the proposed programme of work of the Division for Social Policy and Development for the biennium 1996-1997 was of a traditional nature and format. It should be possible to be more innovative, while remaining within the framework of the current medium-term plan.

2. The relationship between the programme of work and the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development a/ was rather weak. Of the eight subprogrammes included in programmes 25 (Global social issues and policies) and 26 (Social integration), only three had outputs specifically referring to the Summit. These were subprogramme 1 of programme 25 (Analysis of emerging social issues): report to the Commission for Social Development on global trends and emerging issues in subject areas considered by the Summit; subprogramme 4 of programme 25 (Strategies for poverty eradication): report to the Commission on the implementation of the recommendations of the Summit and the achievements of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty; and subprogramme 4 of programme 26 (Social institutions and development): report to the Commission and to the General Assembly on recommendations of the Summit for social integration and policy options for strengthening social institutions. The reasons for the lack of reference to the outcome of the Summit in the other subprogramme were unclear.

3. The question of the need to shape the work programme in the light of the objectives and policy recommendations of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action was relevant not only for the subprogrammes on global social issues, but also for the subprogrammes on the situation of specific groups. The subprogrammes on youth policies and programmes, ageing policies and programmes and disability policies and programmes should also take into account the decisions made at the Summit.

4. It was noted that one of the three core issues considered by the Summit - employment - appeared to be totally absent from the proposed work programme.

5. The placement of the subprogramme on families in the developing process in programme 25 (Global social issues and policies) rather than in programme 26 (Social integration) was questioned.

6. The proposed programme of work included four ad hoc expert groups: one in subprogramme 2 of programme 25 (Social policy design, planning and coordination) - ad hoc expert group on the integration of social objectives in policy-making and implementation; one in subprogramme 4 of programme 25 (Strategies for poverty eradication) - ad hoc expert group in 1996 on poverty eradication strategies and use of quantitative targets in national and international strategies; one in subprogramme 1 of programme 26 (Youth policies

and programmes) - ad hoc expert group and related preparatory work: one session of the youth forum in 1996; and one in subprogramme 4 of programme 26 (Social institutions and development) - expert group on the contribution of cooperatives and farmers' organizations to the achievements of the goals of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. The mandate, rationale, modalities and financing of these expert groups should be made more explicit. In addition, there should also be a clearer relationship between expert group meetings and the contribution of the work programme to the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action.

7. It was further noted that the work programme proposed seven reports for the Commission for Social Development in 1997 and six reports for the General Assembly (one for 1996 and five for 1997). In addition, six non-recurrent publications and five newsletters were also proposed outputs. Within the framework of the mandates currently provided by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, a regrouping of reports and publications should be considered.

8. The Commission considered the work programme, while at the same time studying the role of the Commission in the follow-up of the World Summit for Social Development. Should the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly take decisions that changed the frequency of the sessions of the Commission, as well as other aspects of its functioning, the work programme of the Division for Social Policy and Development would have to be revised accordingly.

9. Some members of the Commission made comments on the question of the resources required for the implementation of the proposed work programme. The Secretariat informed the Commission that, in accordance with current budgetary practices, the possible financial implications of the follow-up of the World Summit for Social Development would be considered by the General Assembly at its fiftieth session in the context of its review of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.

Notes

a/ Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995 (A/CONF.166/9), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.